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14 January 1959

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CENTRAL

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BULLETIN



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DAILY BRIEF

I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

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Mikoyan visit: Moscow press and radio are giving extensive coverage to the "vacationing" Mikoyan's activities in the US. So far there has been little editorial comment. The demonstrations against the deputy premier have not been reported. Emphasis on the cordiality of the welcome gives the impression that the "American public" favors the visit and sympathizes with the Soviet position on many issues, with the implication that it is the US Government that is responsible for blocking progress toward better US-USSR relations.

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East Germany: The shortage of medical doctors is becoming increasingly serious despite efforts to stop their defection. Plans are being considered to bring in physicians from other bloc countries, especially Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia.

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II. ASIA-AFRICA

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Cambodia: Our embassy in Paris has been informed by the Foreign Ministry that the French ambassador in Cambodia has discussed with Premier Sihanouk the plotting against him by certain Vietnamese, Thai, and Cambodian elements. Sihanouk's remarks to the French ambassador confirmed previous reports that the Chinese Communist ambassador had already informed the premier of the plotting and had indicated the US was involved. The French ambassador warned Sihanouk to be wary of Chinese allegations.

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III. THE WEST

NO
France-NATO: [De Gaulle may propose combining the Western Mediterranean Naval Command and the East Atlantic Command into a single NATO command headed by a French officer. A French admiral now heads the subsidiary Western Mediterranean Command, but the Mediterranean as a whole and the Eastern Atlantic area are commanded by British officers. In addition to seeking "prestige" NATO commands, De Gaulle is probably also attempting to gain NATO support for French retention of naval and other military bases in North and West Africa.]

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***Finland:** The minority Agrarian government of Prime Minister Sukselainen, formed on 13 January, will have as its principal task the normalization of trade and political relations with the USSR, which have become steadily worse since last fall. Facing a difficult domestic economic situation and commanding only 48 of the 200 seats in the Diet, the government has an uncertain future unless it is willing to depend upon the 63 votes of the Communist-front Finnish People's Democratic League and the Opposition Social Democrats.

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I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

Soviet Propaganda Treatment of Mikoyan's US Visit

The Soviet propaganda apparatus has given prominent play to detailed daily factual reporting on Soviet Deputy Premier Mikoyan's tour, omitting any mention of the anti-Mikoyan demonstrations. The emphasis has been on the cordiality, candor, and mutual respect of all concerned. With respect to other topics, Moscow's standard attacks on the United States have continued.

The US Embassy in Moscow notes that Soviet accounts portray the American reaction as friendship for the USSR and sympathy with its positions. These reports have included Mikoyan's remarks on such general subjects as the need to end the "cold war," peaceful coexistence, and the improvement of Soviet-American relations. Many of his more pungent comments on specific current problems of international importance, however, have not been quoted, nor have his statements on internal Soviet questions.

Soviet news media, noting that Mikoyan is "on holiday," reported that he has nevertheless talked with American government and business leaders and is expecting to be received at the White House. The subjects of discussion were said to have included the Berlin question and "other international issues," peaceful coexistence, and US-Soviet relations--particularly increased trade, which was presented as a steppingstone to the solution of more complex problems. A public lecturer in Moscow added a new thought--that if Mikoyan is getting such a welcome from top Americans in and out of government when he is only on a private visit, then it is clear how starved Americans are for official contacts with Soviet leaders, how vitally necessary such meetings are, and how right the USSR has been in pursuing a summit conference.

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Soviet officials in Moscow have not commented thus far on the visit.

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East German Medical Situation Worsens

[The East German Communist party's medical commission, which met on 18 December 1958, was told that the shortage of doctors in East Germany has led to an alarming increase in illnesses and deaths,]

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[For example, infant mortality, which had gradually declined between 1945 and 1957, rose during 1958. Since last September the regime has been granting substantial concessions to doctors in an attempt to stem the numerous defections to the West.]

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[the medical commission again considered a proposal to bring physicians to East Germany from other bloc countries, a proposition that had been rejected by the party a few months ago because it was feared the regime would be generally blamed for the situation that brought on the need to import foreigners. The party now appears receptive to plans to bring in physicians primarily from Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia, but a suggestion to invite Hungarian doctors was rejected on political grounds.] two central committee functionaries said that only 'progressive' doctors would be invited.]

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[following the central committee's fourth plenum, to be held 14-16 January, unsatisfactory and inactive medical commission members will be replaced by politically and professionally qualified doctors. Such appointments would be designed to make a good impression on East German doctors and to make the commission more effective in dealing with the doctors.]

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III. THE WEST

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De Gaulle Seeks Greater NATO Command Role

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De Gaulle wants to combine in a new command, under a French officer, the Atlantic lines of communication between France and French Africa--which now are part of the Eastern Atlantic Command under a British admiral--and the present Western Mediterranean Command. A French admiral now is in charge of the Western Mediterranean but is subordinate to the over-all British command of the Mediterranean. The new command would be either independent or directly subordinate to SHAPE.]

[Such a proposal will probably revive the controversial question of a NATO "Iberian Command," covering the general sea area west of Spain and Portugal, which the French requested in 1955 be assigned to a French officer. IBERLANT did not materialize because of political sensitivities concerning its composition and control.]

[In addition to seeking "prestige" NATO commands which he believes France should have because of its international importance, De Gaulle is probably aiming at securing NATO support for French retention of naval and other military bases in North and West Africa. This proposal may also be connected with De Gaulle's reported desire for a NATO land command in North Africa under a French general.]

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